

KANSAS HIGH SCHOOL WINS NATIONAL "SEAT BELTS SAVE" CHALLENGE

Campaign by Maize H.S. Students Boosts Belt Usage, Wins \$1,500 for School; Schools in Maryland and Ohio Also Win for Big Gains in Belt Usage

ALEXANDRIA, Va., June 14, 2019 -- Students at Maize High School in Maize, KS created a comprehensive campaign that built heightened awareness and action about the importance of wearing seat belts to win the \$1,500 prize for best overall campaign in the "Seat Belts Save Challenge," a nationwide competition organized by the National Organizations for Youth Safety (NOYS) and sponsored by The National Road Safety Foundation, a non-profit group that promotes safe driving behavior.

The students organized a wide range of activities, beginning with "Donut forget to wear your seat belt," a kick-off event that gave free donuts to all belted passengers in cars entering the school parking lot. Other activities, which involved collaboration from the Maize Police Department and local community leaders and businesses, included a "Belts for Breakfast Burritos" event and gift card give-aways to those who signed buckle-up pledge cards, brought the school's seat belt usage rate to 92 percent. The campaign also generated more than 2,000 text pledges by students and others in the community to "buckle up and park the phone."

Prizes of \$1,500 were also awarded in two other categories -- greatest improvement in seat belt usage, and highest seat belt use rate. West Clermont High School. In Batavia, OH, recorded a 22 percent increase in seat belt usage from its campaign. Washington High School and Academy in Princess Ann, MD won for the highest seat belt usage rate, achieving 97 percent among its students. More than 48,800 students from 55 schools in 27 states nationwide participated in the Seat Belts Save Challenge this year.

The Seat Belts Save Challenge was initiated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and NOYS, with prizes furnished by The National Road Safety Foundation, to increase seat belt usage among young people, who are at heightened risk from death or injury in traffic crashes because of their low belt usage rate. NHTSA estimates that more than half of teen drivers killed in crashes and more than 60% of teen passengers killed in crashes were not wearing seat belts. In 2017 alone, NHTSA says seat belts saved an estimated 14,955 lives and could have saved an additional 2,549 people if they had been wearing seat belts.

NOYS and The National Road Safety Foundation invited high schools throughout the country to develop local campaigns in their schools and communities to increase belt usage. The Seat Belts Save Challenge is documented by an unannounced seat belt check before a school's campaign, followed by another unannounced check after a two-week education and awareness campaign conducted by students.

"Seat belts are the first and most effective line of defense in preventing deaths and serious injuries from traffic crashes," said April Rai, CEO of NOYS. "Since teens

historically have a lower rate of buckling up, the “Seat Belts Save” challenge has proven to be a good way of engaging them in messaging that leads to positive action.”

“We salute the students at the winning schools, as well as all the other schools that participated in this important program,” said Michelle Anderson, Director of Operations at The National Road Safety Foundation. “Their efforts are certain to lead to a safer driving experience for the students and others in their communities.”

More information is at www.seatbeltssave.org. Also visit www.noys.org and www.teenlane.org.